The Royal Music Library and its Handel Collection

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The year 2007 saw several round-figure anniversaries of events associated with Handel’s music, most obviously those of his first and last oratorios – *Il trionfo del Tempo e del Disinganno* (1707) and its final English version as *The Triumph of Time and Truth* (1757) – but also that of the first Crystal Palace Handel Festival (1857). Rather less obvious, because it does not relate so directly to Handel’s career or to performances of his music, was the anniversary of the presentation of the Royal Music Library to the Trustees of the British Museum by Queen Elizabeth II, announced on 27 November 1957. Her Majesty’s gift commemorated the two hundredth anniversary of a similar occurrence in 1757, when King George II had given the Old Royal Library to the newly-established British Museum.

The Royal Music Library has one of the major collections of source material for Handel’s music, in particular because it includes ninety-six volumes of his musical autographs. There are other important items as well, but it is the autographs that render the Royal Music Library collection indispensable to scholarly work on nearly every one of Handel’s compositions: in addition to their musical content, the pages of the autographs have many details that provide striking images of the composer’s activity (see figs 1–3).  

Before the twentieth century a few favoured musicians and scholars visited the Royal Music Library at various times, and it is perhaps not surprising that the best evidence for such visits comes in connection with references to Handel’s autographs. For about 130 years consultation of any item from the Library would have involved making arrangements to see it at a royal palace, probably requiring letters of reference and under circumstances limited by the availability of staff and by the palace’s other functions. From 1919, when the Royal Music Library was established, on loan to the British Museum, in a specially-furnished room, access gradually became easier. The use of the autographs has increased greatly over the last half-century and the transfer of the collection to the British Museum’s ownership can be regarded as one of the factors that stimulated the renewal of Handel scholarship during the second half of the twentieth century.

It came at a critical moment from the international perspective, at the time when the *Hallische Händel-Ausgabe* had recently been established. The early volumes of the HHA had scholarly deficiencies when compared with the contemporary new complete editions for the music of Bach and Mozart, and these were partly the consequence of a tardiness in the evolution of procedures for the critical consideration of evidence from the autographs in relation to other relevant sources: the conducting scores, the printed word-books and the secondary musical sources, manuscript and printed. The beginning of that process was considerably influenced

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1 In one place on the autograph of *Scipione* (R.M. 20.c.6, f. 64r), there is even an impression of the composer’s thumbprint, where Handel smudged the ink in order to make a correction: see C. Steven LaRue, ‘Handeliana’, *Newsletter of the American Handel Society*, iv: 2 (August 1989), pp. 1-2.

2 At its inception the HHA was conceived as a revision of Chrysander’s collected edition of Handel’s music, in order to provide performing editions: see Annette Landgraf, ‘Halle und die Hallische Händel-Ausgabe – Idee und Verwirklichung. Ein Excurs in die Jahre 1940-1946’, in Klaus Hortschansky and Konstanze Musketa (eds), *Georg Friedrich Händel – ein Lebensinhalt: Gedenkschrift für Bernd Baselt* (Halle an der Saale, 1995), pp. 315-42. The first HHA editions appeared in 1955, 1956 and 1958. Access to primary sources was inhibited by the circumstance that, in the post-war division of responsibilities among the German publishing houses, the Handel edition was produced and managed from Eastern Germany; the first visits to the Royal Music Library by German HHA volume editors were in 1955 (Serauky) and 1957 (Serauky, Ameln, Siegmund-Schultze).
Fig. 1. A page from the autograph of the opera *Giustino* (1736), including a section amended by Handel in red pencil (R.M. 20.b.4, f. 64v).
Fig. 2: The opening page of the autograph of the Coronation Anthem *Zadok the Priest* (1727) (R.M. 20.h.5, f. 1r).
The final page of the oratorio *Jephtha* (1751), Handel's last major autograph (R.M. 20.e.9, f. 134v).

Fig. 3. The final page of the oratorio *Jephtha* (1751), Handel’s last major autograph (R.M. 20.e.9, f. 134v).
by the contemporary activity of British scholars who were working on their own projects
during the 1950s: the preparation of Winton Dean’s book on the oratorios, and Watkins
Shaw’s edition of Messiah. 3 The establishment of good critical methods for unravelling the
complex histories behind the composition of the scores of Handel’s operas and oratorios, a
recognition of the quality of the music itself, and the expansion of interest through performances in opera theatres and concert halls, have combined to give the study of Handel’s
music a remarkable vigour and a relevance during the intervening fifty years.

When consulting the autographs today at the British Library, the reader is the successor
to a chain of others who may have looked at the same pages before: illustrious predecessors
include such famous names as Charles Burney and Felix Mendelssohn (see fig. 4). The
question of where, when and how these people saw the autographs is not always easy to
answer, for there are gaps in the known history of the collection. Alec Hyatt King’s booklet
Handel and his Autographs summarizes virtually all that is known for certain about the
autographs in the century following Handel’s death. 4 They initially passed as legacies from the composer to John Christopher Smith senior and thence, on his death in 1763, to his son,
but the process by which they proceeded from the younger J. C. Smith to the Royal Music
Library is uncertain. The only evidence on the subject is a passage in William Coxe’s
Anecdotes of George Frederick Handel and John Christopher Smith, published in 1799, which
relates that, in gratitude for a pension granted by King George III following the death of the
Dowager Princess of Wales, whom he had served as a harpsichord master, Smith ‘expressed
his gratitude in a way he thought most acceptable to his Sovereign; and in the fullness of his
heartfelt acknowledgment, presented to the King the rich legacy which Handel had left
him, of all his manuscript music in score’. 5 This narrative is not supported by any
documentation: no evidence has yet been produced from court archives to confirm Smith’s
post in the household of Augusta, Princess of Wales, or his pension, nor does there seem to
be any mention of the receipt of the autographs into the royal collection in court records or
private correspondence. 6 However, since Coxe was Smith’s stepson and legatee, his story
may be correct in outline, and if so we must suppose that the collection of Handel’s
autographs was in the royal collection by 1799, but how long had it been there?

The dates that may be relevant to the story are 1772 (the death of Princess Augusta), 1774
(when Smith purchased a house in Bath and decided to move there permanently, following
the last season of oratorios that he presented in London), and 1795 (Smith’s death). One
plausible interpretation of Coxe’s version of events would be as follows: that some

3 Winton Dean, Handel’s Dramatic Oratorios and Masques (London, 1959); Handel, Messiah, ed. Watkins Shaw
(London, 1959 [vocal score], 1965 [full score]). See also chapter VII (‘Textual Authority’, in Watkins Shaw, A

4 A. Hyatt King, Handel and his Autographs (London, 1967); the wider context of the history of the Royal Music
Library had been the subject of an earlier essay, which was reprinted in an expanded form as ‘The Royal Music

5 Anecdotes, p. 55; no author is named on the book’s title page, but Coxe’s authorship is generally accepted. The royal
collection certainly did not receive all of Handel’s ‘manuscript music in score’, since the conducting scores which
would surely have been included in this description were retained by Smith and disposed of later: see Hans Dieter
Clausen, Handel’s Direktionspartituren (‘Handexemplare’), Hamburger Beiträge zur Musikwissenschaft, vii
(Hamburg, 1972). The circumstances under which some autographs were detached from the main collection,
including the seven volumes acquired by Viscount Fitzwilliam, are unknown.

6 There is no mention of the Handel autographs, or of any Royal Music Library, in Sir John Fortescue (ed.), The
Correspondence of King George III from 1760 to December 1783, 6 vols (London, 1927-8), though this may reflect
Fortescue’s own areas of interest: see Sheila de Bellaigue, ‘The Royal Archives, Windsor’, The Court Historian, iii:2
(July 1998), p. 12. Furthermore, no references to the royal music collections are to be found in Arthur Aspinall
(ed.), The Later Correspondence of George III, 5 vols (Cambridge, 1962-70), or Arthur Aspinall (ed.), The Letters of
King George IV 1812-1830, 3 vols (Cambridge, 1938).
Fig. 4. Annotation by Charles Burney added at the top of a page of Handel’s autograph of *Scipione* (R.M. 20.c.6, f. 33r).
arrangement was made for Smith’s support soon after the Princess’s death, and that the autographs were presented to King George III when Smith moved to Bath – that is, around 1774. This scenario was accepted by King, though Martha Ronish and I were cautious about it in 1994 when we described the history of the collection in our Catalogue of Handel’s Musical Autographs, and I developed more considerable doubts about four years later when I encountered a couple of references from the papers of James Harris that are now in the Earl of Malmesbury’s family archive. In April 1775 and November 1776 Harris’s daily journals record visits to the King’s Library at Buckingham Palace (then still known as the Queen’s House), which had just seen the completion of a major building programme in the south wing of the Palace, including extensions designed by Sir William Chambers to house King George III’s ever-expanding collections. The rooms comprised the Great (or West) Library (1762–4), the South and Octagon Libraries (1766–7), and the East Library (1772–3). Harris’s journal entry for 19 November 1776 includes a description of the library’s treasures that he saw during a spare hour and a half while he was waiting for a meeting with the Queen. He was in a favoured position to have access to the library on account of his post as Secretary to the Queen, and among the royal officers he would have been recognized as having an interest in the library and its collections, on account of his own scholarly publications and his position as one of the Trustees of the British Museum. His diary also records that Handel’s music was one of the principal topics in his conversations with the King, and indeed on one occasion he played two pieces by Handel on the harpsichord at the King’s invitation. Yet there is no mention of Handel’s autographs, either in Harris’s descriptions of what he was shown in the Library or in his record of conversations with George III. It seems inconceivable that this topic would not have arisen, and been recorded, in one context or the other if the King had recently acquired the autographs, and my best guess for the moment is that they had not yet appeared in the Royal Library by the time of Harris’s death in 1780.

However, the ‘Chronological list of Handel’s Works’ that was printed in Charles Burney’s book about the 1784 Handel Commemoration begins with ‘Original Manuscripts in the Possession of His Majesty, Amounting to Eighty-two Volumes’, so they were in George III’s library by the mid-1780s (see fig. 5). The book was published in 1785, but a list of the manuscripts was in existence by the autumn of 1784: in a letter of 7 November 1784 to Mrs Delany, relating to the music collection of her brother Bernard Granville, the King referred to ‘Mr. Granville’s willingness of letting the King see those Volumes that are not in the list of His original Collection’. The reference to ‘Eighty-two Volumes’ is particularly intriguing, as it implies that the bindery in the basement of the Royal Library had already

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9 Hampshire Record Office, 9M73/G840, ff. 2v-3r. Harris’s description concentrated on Italian books and early printed books from the fifteenth century, mainly of Classical authors but also ‘the first Chaucer’.
10 Burrows and Dunhill, op. cit., pp. 695-6, 796-7.
11 Charles Burney, *An Account of the Musical Performances … in Commemoration of Handel* (London, 1785), ‘Chronological list of Handel’s works’, p. 42. The year-dates were probably copied from those on the spines of the volumes. Some of the autographs seem to have been missed by whoever prepared the list, perhaps because the binding programme was still in progress: the Fireworks Music, for example, is named among the music ‘Not in His Majesty’s Collection’. On the other hand, Burney included the manuscript copy of part-books for the trio sonatas HWV 380-385 (now R.M. 18.h.3, and attributing the music to ‘Mr. Hendel’), so perhaps ‘Original Manuscripts’ was intended to cover all the early manuscripts of Handel’s works owned by the King: if the latter, then the absence of any mention of the ‘Smith Collection’ copies may be significant.
12 The letter is now bound at the end of the ‘Granville Collection’ score of Handel’s Water Music, Egerton MS. 2946, f. ii (following f. 45).
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Fig. 5. The ‘Chronological List’ from Charles Burney, *An Account of the Musical Performances … in Commemoration of Handel* (London, 1785) (R.M. 5.g.2).
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done its work, producing the volumes that were still greatly in evidence when I first encountered the autographs in the 1970s, and a few of which are still to be seen today, in something close to their original state (see figs 6, 7, and Appendix 1).

The bindings of the autographs were described thus in the nineteenth century:13 The precise form that is found on the Handel autographs cannot at the moment be dated accurately: the bindery records for the various batches of work do not seem to survive (or to be accessible), though considerable provision of material must have been involved. R.M. 5.b.1-5, a collection of word-books from the 1784 Handel Commemoration and the succeeding festivals up to 1791, which was probably bound in the 1790s and necessarily has simpler labels, seems to represent a slightly later version of the style. A closer version is found on some manuscript volumes of Handel’s music that were copied in the mid–1780s, apparently in fulfilment of the King’s desire to make his collection more comprehensive by adding works that he thought were not included in his run of autographs.16 It therefore seems plausible at the moment that the autographs themselves were also bound in the 1780s. The appearance of the Fireworks Music, The Choice of Hercules and the organ concertos in Burney’s list of works ‘not in His Majesty’s collection’ suggests that some volumes may not have been bound and added to the shelves at the time the list of autographs was prepared: this would also account for the rather low reported total of eighty–two volumes. Among the works not mentioned by Burney is the Birthday Ode for Queen Anne: the copy from the mid–1780s in an autograph-style binding (now R.M. 19.e.1) may have originated because the autograph of this work had not yet arrived on the shelves and the King was not aware of its existence. The bindings are practical and workmanlike, but not particularly special. When Victor Schoelcher saw the autographs in the 1850s he commented on the ‘poor original binding’ and said that if he were Queen

It [the collection] is uniformly half bound with redbacks, and with the titles of the works on green labels, followed by the words ‘by Handel’. At foot of each is printed ‘Original Score’, also on a green label; the dates are below again, on the redback.

In time the ‘green’ spine labels have darkened in colour; the dates are stamped directly onto the red leather, on the panel below the label ‘by Handel’. The general style of ‘half-leather’ bindings (red goat-skin spines and corners, marbled paper on the boards) was adopted for some of the royal music, and for some printed books as well, apparently over a considerable period during George III’s reign. The precise form that is found on the Handel autographs cannot at the moment be dated accurately: the bindery records for the various batches of work do not seem to survive (or to be accessible), though considerable provision of material must have been involved. R.M. 5.b.1-5, a collection of word-books from the 1784 Handel Commemoration and the succeeding festivals up to 1791, which was probably bound in the 1790s and necessarily has simpler labels, seems to represent a slightly later version of the style. A closer version is found on some manuscript volumes of Handel’s music that were copied in the mid–1780s, apparently in fulfilment of the King’s desire to make his collection more comprehensive by adding works that he thought were not included in his run of autographs. It therefore seems plausible at the moment that the autographs themselves were also bound in the 1780s. The appearance of the Fireworks Music, The Choice of Hercules and the organ concertos in Burney’s list of works ‘not in His Majesty’s collection’ suggests that some volumes may not have been bound and added to the shelves at the time the list of autographs was prepared: this would also account for the rather low reported total of eighty–two volumes. Among the works not mentioned by Burney is the Birthday Ode for Queen Anne: the copy from the mid–1780s in an autograph-style binding (now R.M. 19.e.1) may have originated because the autograph of this work had not yet arrived on the shelves and the King was not aware of its existence. The bindings are practical and workmanlike, but not particularly special. When Victor Schoelcher saw the autographs in the 1850s he commented on the ‘poor original binding’ and said that if he were Queen

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13 Although the bindings may have a continuous history back to Burney’s time, this of course does not preclude the possibility of interference with the volumes in the meantime, from motives of conservation or improved presentation. Some of the annotated leaves added by Nicolay may post-date 1785. The flyleaves of the some of the autograph volumes have watermarks incorporating the trade names ‘T. Budgen’ and ‘Curteis & Sons’, which indicate papers no earlier than 1787 and 1793, respectively, and in other volumes the flyleaves are modern. In the course of the major conservation programme in the 1980s (mainly concentrated in the series R.M. 20.a, b and c) most of the original spines and labels were replaced.

14 R.M. 18.h.2, f. 25.

15 The binding style is not found extensively on books in the King’s Library collection at the British Library, though a variant (with monogram GR on the spine) occurs on smaller-format play-texts in the C.12.f. and C.12.g series as well as occasional volumes elsewhere.

16 See John H. Roberts, ‘The Aylesford Collection’, in Terence Best (ed.), Handel Collections and their History (Oxford, 1993), pp. 49-52. The initiation of copies that were derived from volumes in the ‘Granville’ collection can be dated from George III’s correspondence with Mrs Delany in 1784–5, and it may be assumed that the King also pursued music from the ‘Aylesford’ collection at around the same time. No doubt this interest was stimulated by the activity surrounding the Handel Commemoration and the work-list in Burney’s publication, which the King saw in draft.
Fig. 6. All of the surviving original bindings from volumes of Handel’s autographs in the Royal Music Library.
Fig. 7. The binding of Susanna, R.M. 2018.
Victoria he ‘would have those precious volumes bound in crimson velvet, mounted with gold’. He probably noticed the contrast with the style of the most sumptuous Royal Library bindings, in full red goat-skin with gold tooling, which was indeed used for some music volumes (see figs 14–16). My impression is that this full binding style was more favoured for printed books, especially those in folio page-formats, and for music manuscripts that were comparable in size and calligraphic style.

I have jumped a little ahead of the story with Queen Victoria and Schoelcher, however, and in doing so passed over the foggiest period in the history of the Royal Music Library. There is, indeed, a question as to whether there was actually a distinct music library, as a section or a room, in the last two decades of the eighteenth century: it seems more likely that the music, or at least most of it, was physically part of the general Royal Library. Less is known about the creation of George III’s music collection than is the case with his books and pictures, but it seems likely that most of the pre-Hanoverian items in the Royal Music Library were acquired by purchase after 1760 rather than by inheritance from previous monarchs. I have not been able to trace any musical items back to royal ownership in Queen Anne’s reign, but the libraries of George I and George II had included music that is now in the Royal Music Library, in particular the volumes of Agostino Steffani’s music with ‘Hanover’ bindings that are now in the R.M. 23 series. ‘Libraries’ here refers to the collections rather than their physical location, which would have been at St James’s Palace. These were presumably personal collections rather than Crown property, and there was almost certainly some traffic between the monarch’s library and music that had been collected by other members of the royal family. The music collection formed by Frederick, Prince of Wales, most likely passed to his widow and thus eventually to George III, and similarly the apparently independent collections of George III’s Queen and eldest son, formed in the later eighteenth century, probably gravitated into the one Royal collection, becoming the property of the monarch.

The terminology of the collection has its own history. There is no doubt that George III’s large general collection was ‘The King’s Library’, and the subsequent collection which was

17 Victor Schoelcher, *The Life of Handel* (London, 1857), p. 353; in the Preface Schoelcher says that he spent more than a month in daily visits to the collection at Buckingham Palace (p. xxi), and thanks Prince Albert (rather than Queen Victoria) for permission to take copies of music from the autographs (pp. xvii–xviii).

18 The folio volumes of the ‘Smith Collection’ match in general style the best-quality bindings in George III’s general library, many of which are illustrated in Jane Roberts (ed.), *George III & Queen Charlotte: Patronage, Collecting and Court Taste* (London, 2004), chapter 7 (‘Books and Binding’), pp. 220–43.

19 On the subject of George III’s other collections, see Roberts, *George III & Queen Charlotte*. According to Hilda Andrews, *Catalogue of the King’s Music Library. Part II: The Miscellaneous Manuscripts* (London, 1929), pp. ix–x, George bought more than a thousand music volumes in 1762 as the foundation of his music collection, but Hyatt King was unable to confirm this: see King, ‘The Royal Music Library’, p. 109. One of the most famous pre-1714 manuscripts, the large volume of Purcell’s autographs (R.M. 20 h.8, allocated by Squire to a shelf-mark immediately following the Handel autographs), belonged in the first half of the eighteenth century to Purcell’s grandson, and was subsequently presented to George III by Philip Hayes. The only volume in the Royal Music Library collection with a pre-1700 royal binding is a volume of fantasias by Coperario (R.M. 20 k.3, arms of King Charles I), but it is not known whether this had been in continuous royal ownership.

20 Two manuscript volumes of William Croft’s music (R.M. 24 d.5 and R.M. 24 g.2) may also have been presentation copies from George I’s library. Croft presented the first volume of his printed anthem collection *Musica Sacra* to the King (the dedicatee) in January 1725, as reported in *The Whitehall Evening Post* for 9–12 January, but the present copy R.M. 14 d.1 has a later style of binding.

21 King, *Some British Collectors of Music*, includes as Plate VI an illustration of a fly-leaf from R.M. 19 e.7 with Nicolay’s annotation ‘This Volume belongs to The Queen. 1788’.
The property of Queen Victoria would of course have been ‘The Queen’s Library’. The first specific use of ‘The Royal Music Library’ seems to have been in an article under that title in *The Musical Times* for July 1902. This was published soon after King Edward VII had succeeded Queen Victoria, and the title was perhaps an early attempt, not necessarily at political correctness, but at covering all eventualities for the future. It may also have indicated that the music collection, from various tributary sources in the royal family, was now regarded as a more formal public entity, though still owned personally. After the music library was deposited at the British Museum under King George V it was generally referred to as ‘The King’s Music Library’, rather confusingly in view of the ‘King’s Library’ collection, received in 1828, in the same building. Barclay Squire’s published catalogue in 1927 went under the title of ‘Catalogue of the King’s Music Library’, but the shelf-mark series that he allocated to the collection was R.M., for ‘Royal Music [Library]’.

If the eighteenth-century materials in the Royal Music Library had accumulated partly from other members of the royal family in addition to the king, there is also evidence that, at least at one stage in its history, the king’s collection had been divided between different locations. During the months leading up to her untimely death in 1737 Queen Caroline had been actively involved in setting up a ‘library’ of her own – that is, a furnished room at St James’s Palace. ‘A Catalogue of ‘The Royal Library of Her late Majesty Queen Caroline’, ‘distributed into faculties’ and dated 1743, has one section devoted to ‘Musick’, mainly in Press F. There are only two identifiable Handel items, an early edition of *Ottone* among the printed music and a manuscript of ‘Duetti del Sig. Gio. Federico Handel fol.’ (probably the present R.M. 18.b.11). The manuscript music that is listed also includes copies of Steffani’s operas which (like the duet manuscript) had originated in Hanover and would have been successively the property of Kings George I and George II. Queen Caroline’s library was therefore not necessarily exclusively her personal property, but included ‘royal’ material that was formally owned by the King, and had presumably been separated with his approval in order to set up a sub-collection around the Queen’s own interests. Also relevant is the group of early word-books in the section of the Queen’s library catalogue headed ‘Italian Plays, Operas’, which lists about thirty Handel items (see Appendix 2). These include nothing published after 1734, though there are word-books from the Opera of the Nobility productions in 1735 and 1736. Presumably the royal family once owned word-books for all of the productions they attended; the absence of books from Handel’s 1734-35 season seems particularly curious since that was the one in which the support of Queen Caroline seems to have been most crucial.

Perhaps this was also a precautionary measure against a further division in the collection, of the type that had occurred in 1837 (see below)

In Lionel Pike, ‘Purcell’s “Rejoice in the Lord”, All Ways’, *Music & Letters*, lxxxii:3 (2001), pp. 391-420, this is abbreviated to ‘R’ and the manuscript concerned is referred to as ‘Royal 20.h.8’: there is no authority for this form, which obscures the distinction between the Royal Music Library and the various other materials from different royal collections at the British Library.


See Colin Timms, ‘Gregorio Piva and Steffani’s Principal Copyist’, in Ian Bent (ed.), *Source Materials and the Interpretation of Music* (London, 1981), pp. 169-90. The R.M. series has multiple copies of several Hanover operas and of Steffani’s Italian duets, which probably indicates original ownership by various members of the Hanover family, but some of the volumes in the list of Queen Caroline’s library are identifiable as coming from collections copied for the Electress Sophia or George I (before he became King of Great Britain). The music in the Queen’s library also included two copies of *Musica Sacra*, the two-volume edition of William Croft’s church music published in 1725-6. These were probably the composer’s presentation copies to George I and George II (then Prince of Wales), who were the dedicatees of the volumes, but the surviving copy in the Royal Music Library (R.M. 14.d.1) is unlikely to be either of them.

Returning once more to the music collection of George III, the question of whether there was a separate ‘music library’ becomes important in view of the dispersal of the Buckingham Palace library that took place after his death. In 1825 work began on the major rebuilding programme that converted the ‘Queen’s House’ into Buckingham Palace: the new building was not finally handed over until May 1837. During the building works, furnishings and King George IV’s personal collections were stored in the Riding School next to Carlton House. The books from the King’s Library were moved to Kensington Palace in 1825, and George IV determined to present this collection to the British Museum: the new gallery at the Museum was completed in 1827 and the books were transferred in 1828, with the exception of thirty-five volumes that were retained by the King and sent to Windsor Castle.27 The ‘King’s Library’ collection, as received by the British Museum, included at least two important Handelian items: the autograph of three of the Op. 4 organ concertos, and a copy of Mainwaring’s biography of Handel with George III’s annotations that was lost in twentieth-century wartime bombing (see fig. 8).28 The opera word-books in the King’s Library also presumably included many that had been the personal copies of the monarchs: there is a striking correlation between the list of word-books in Queen Caroline’s library and items that are to be found in King’s Library collection at the British Library today, mostly in the series 162.g and 163.g (see Appendix 2).29 The King’s Library collection included only a small amount of manuscript music, and it is not known how the volume of organ concerto autographs came to be among the 1838 deposit.30 It is possible that it had become detached from the main run of Handel’s autographs, but unfortunately Burney’s list is rather vague about the volumes of instrumental music, and the present binding of King’s MS. 317 dates from the middle of the twentieth century, with no record as to whether its predecessor matched the ‘Nicolay’ bindings.31 It is therefore also possible that this volume had a separate provenance and had come into the Royal Library independently.

Clearly, however, the royal music collection as a whole was not included with the King’s Library, and its location is obscure. There is no official record of the fate of the royal music at this period, but there is some information about the collection of Handel autographs in the diaries of Felix Mendelssohn from his visits to Britain in 1829 and 1833; in both years he saw the autographs, which are the subject of diary entries on 17 July 1829 and 19 June 1833.32 The 1829 entry is particularly valuable because it includes a list of opera and oratorio

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28 See William C. Smith, ‘George III, Handel and Mainwaring’, The Musical Times, lxv (1924), pp. 789-95. The present copy of the Memoirs with shelf-mark 276.h.47 (formerly 1416.h.59) has a label recording that ‘This book formerly in the General Library was transferred in 1952 to the King’s Library to replace the copy destroyed by enemy action in 1940’; unfortunately no complete photographic copy of the original had been made, and Smith was unable to decipher a few of the annotations. Another King’s Library copy of the Memoirs (276.k.15) has a ‘George III’ binding, but no annotations.
29 A copy of a word-book for Muzio Scevola with a royal binding was also advertised for sale by J. & J. Lubrano (Boston, U.S.A.) in 1992; this work is not included in the list of Queen Caroline’s library. The present bindings of the word-books in the King’s Library date from 1939; previously the books had probably been sewn but not bound in boards.
30 Apart from the volume of Handel organ concertos, the only other music in the collection is a Frottola in King’s MS. 289 and six volumes of French songs (King’s MSS 330-337). King’s MS. 442 has the texts of two arias from the March 1730 revival of Handel’s Guilio Cesare, probably originally a manuscript amendment to a printed word-book.
31 Another autograph volume, now R.M. 20.g.12, had a Nicolay-period label ‘Organ Concerto’ [sic], and must have been the volume of organ concertos listed by Schoelcher and Jekyll. The manuscript has been re-bound, but the label is preserved separately, with the original boards.
32 Oxford, Bodleian Library MS. M.Deneke.Mendelssohn.g.1, ff. 14-16r; g. 4, f. 16v-17r. See Ralf Wehner, ‘Zu Mendelssohns Kenntnis Handelscher Werke’, Handel-Jahrbuch, lv (2007), pp. 173-201, which includes transcriptions of the diary entries and texts of letters between Mendelssohn and Zelter on the subject of the autographs. The 1829 memoranda, in ink, are apparently original notes made on the spot.
Fig. 8a, 8b. King George III’s annotations on two pages of [John Mainwaring], *Memoirs of the Life of the late George Frederic Handel* (London, 1760). Original destroyed in 1940; reproduced from *The Musical Times*, 65 (1924), pp. 790, 794.
volumes by titles (see fig. 9), probably recorded in response to a request from Carl Friedrich Zelter, in addition to memoranda about the music in specific volumes to which he gave particular attention. Predictably, he looked first at the autograph of Messiah, but he also showed considerable interest in the volumes containing Italian Duets (now R.M. 20.g.9) and the Psalms Laudate Pueri Dominum and Dixit Dominus (R.M. 20.f.1); he was, furthermore, allowed to borrow the latter for a time in October-November 1829 so that he could transcribe his own copy of Dixit Dominus.  

In a letter to Zelter on 20 July 1829 Mendelssohn referred to the autographs as being ‘in kings private library’, and the later diary entry begins ‘Kings library 19 Juni 1833’. Unfortunately he does not say where he found this library, but the surrounding diary entries show that he did not leave London. The building works at Buckingham Palace were undertaken in phases. The ‘Old Library’ (probably Chambers’s block comprising the Great [West] Library, the East Library and the South Library) had been demolished by 1828, but the Octagon survived until another phase of rebuilding in the 1850s: at one stage it was proposed to use it as an armoury, but eventually it was reconstructed as a private chapel for Queen Victoria, with a kitchen below. Perhaps the Octagon was maintained as a ‘safe area’ for the music collection and for some other items during the building works, which would explain Mendelssohn’s description of the venue as the ‘King’s Library’. Alternatively, if the music did not go with the books to Kensington Palace it may have been stored in another location near to Buckingham Palace, perhaps St James’s Palace or Clarence House. If the Handel autographs were moved thus, it is possible that they were not put on shelves, but were kept in packing cases. Whatever the circumstances, it is doubtful that the royal palaces were able to facilitate the extended study of particular scores from the music collection in the period after the destruction of George III’s library, or that subsequent curators had the same level of influence and interest as Nicolay.

Burney’s commentaries on Handel’s music in A General History of Music reveal that during the 1780s he looked at about 25 autographs of the operas: he even reproduced images of Handel’s date-annotations from Berenice in the book, and when discussing Poro he referred to ‘the printed copy [possibly one of the early editions of Poro an Opera, now R.M. 7.h.19 and R.M. 7.h.38], as well as the original score in Handel’s own hand-writing [now R.M. 20.b.13], which are both before me’. It seems that he was given privileged access to the King’s music collection, probably in recognition that he had agreed, rather reluctantly, to give the profits from his book about the Handel Commemoration to the Fund for Decayed Musicians. He may

33 See Wehner, ‘Zu Mendelssohns Kenntnis Handelscher Werke’, p. 182. This precedent should perhaps make us a little cautious about dismissing the story that Friedrich Chrysander was permitted to borrow some autographs overnight during his visits to London in connection with the preparation of his Handel Edition: see Alec Hyatt King, ‘Frederick Nicolay, Chrysander and the Royal Music Library’, in his Musical Pursuits: Selected Essays (London, 1987), pp. 107-18. A more significant question about Chrysander’s working methods perhaps concerns whether he was allowed to bring conducting scores from Hamburg to London for these visits.

34 In a letter of 3 April 1839 to William Sterndale Bennett, Mendelssohn similarly said that he ‘saw the original [autograph] of Sampson in the King’s Library in 1829’.


36 In the nineteenth century detailed study may only have been possible for Messiah and Jephtha, following publication of facsimiles of the autograph volumes in 1868 and 1885, respectively.

37 Charles Burney, A General History of Music from the Earliest Ages to the Present Period, 4 vols (London, 1776-89). The material on Handel’s operas is in vol. iv (1789): facsimiles from the Berenice autograph on p. 411 (footnote f), quotation concerning Poro on p. 351 (footnote b). Burney’s literal transcriptions of composition dates reveal that he had taken them directly from Handel’s autographs, and not from Mainwaring’s list (see note 53, below).

Fig. 9. The first page from Felix Mendelssohn’s list of the volumes of Handel’s autograph in the ‘King’s Library’, 1829 (Oxford, Bodleian Library, MS. D.71).
have done some of his work at a desk in the Royal Library, but there is also evidence that he was allowed to borrow some of the volumes. Writing from his London home to his daughter Fanny (who was with the Court at Windsor), he mentioned on 4 December that he was ‘at this moment working hard at one of the two books, w[hi]ch His Majesty has been most graciously pleased to lend me’: one of the ‘books’ was certainly ‘the original foul Score in Handel’s own hand-writing’ of the third act of *Muzio Scevola* (now R.M. 20.b.7), and the other was probably the early copy of *Amadigi* (R.M. 19.g.2). In a further letter of 8 January 1787 he was even more explicit: ‘I keep at home this Evening, & shall go on with my review of *Rodelinda & Scipio*, the two operas of Handel, w[hi]ch I have been last graciously intrusted.’ In contrast to the attention that he paid to the operas, Burney seems to have taken little interest in the oratorio autographs: in the *General History* he simply gave a list of Handel’s later oratorios, with dates of varying accuracy but reflecting years of first performance, rather than years of composition as in the *Handel Commemoration* list. It is also remarkable that, as far as can be determined from the works so far investigated, Samuel Arnold used manuscripts from other collections as copy for previously unpublished works in the preparation of his collected edition of Handel’s music (1787-97), which suggests that he had no access to the King’s music library.

On the accession of Victoria in 1837, what might be described in general terms as the ‘royal music collection’ was divided, since George III’s eldest surviving son took off a substantial amount of the music when he became King of Hanover, on the separation of the crowns. His taste, however, was for modern music (J. C. Bach and onwards), and no significant Handel material went to Hanover. The reduction in the quantity of royal music remaining in London no doubt simplified the business of establishing a home for it at the new Buckingham Palace. It was probably during the early 1840s, and under the influence of Prince Albert, that the music collection that had remained in England at last became a physical entity as a separate ‘Royal Music Library’ with, eventually, a recognizable location. This could have been an entirely accidental consequence of the combination of Albert’s interests with the circumstance that the music had remained in London by default when most of George III’s library collection had gone to Windsor. In the 1840s Vincent Novello saw some of the Handel autographs, presumably at Buckingham Palace. They were certainly there a decade later, when Schoelcher described them as ‘buried in a sort of private

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39 The two letters quoted here are now in the James Marshall and Marie-Louise Osborn Collection, Beinecke Rare Book and Manuscript Library, Yale University; I thank the Library for making copies available to me during the preparation of this article.

40 Burney’s visits to Windsor in December 1786 (see Lonsdale, *Dr Charles Burney*, pp. 330-2) were an important stratagem for gaining access to the King and securing his permission for access to the Handel materials in the Royal Library, but Lonsdale’s statement (p. 332) that Burney ‘returned to London with the manuscript scores of *Rodelinda* and *Scipio*’ is not supported from the letters, which give no hint that the music itself might have been kept at Windsor. However, the possibility that at least some of the music collection was available there is suggested by Burney’s memorandum in his pocket-book that, while he was at Windsor, ‘some very scarce & curious MS. Compositions of Handel’ were brought to Fanny’s apartment for his ‘amusement’ (ibid., p. 332).


42 It is possible that the royal music collection had already been divided into two sections before 1837, and kept in different locations. Two catalogues of the music library of King George V of Hanover, grandson of George III, are preserved as BL Add. MSS 57974 and 57975. A substantial collection of printed and manuscript music from the Hanoverian royal library, including many items deriving from the English court before 1837, was acquired by the Beinecke Rare Book and Manuscript Library, Yale University, in 2008.

office’; Alec Hyatt King suggested that this was a room that doubled as a music library and the office of the Master of the Queen’s Music, probably picking up hints from Schoelcher’s acknowledgment to ‘Mr Anderson, who holds in his charge the Handelian manuscripts at Buckingham Palace’, and the more explicit statement by George Macfarren in 1859 that the autographs were ‘now preserved in Mr. Anderson’s dressing-room in Buckingham Palace’. 44 At that stage the autographs, with a number of other Handel scores, may have been kept separately from the general run of royally-owned music, which also came to include the volumes of the Händelgesellschaft edition, to which the Queen was a subscriber. Later in the nineteenth century the autographs seem to have been stored with the remainder of the Royal Music Library in a dedicated room at the Palace, which in turn became used as the office for the Master, but only after the music collection had been transferred to yet another location. 45

From the second half of the nineteenth century there is an inventory of the Handel manuscripts in the Royal Music Library, including ‘A List of the [autograph] MSS of Handel preserved in Buckingham Palace, 87 volumes’ (see fig. 10), from which the description of the bindings was quoted above. It is found in one of three handwritten volumes devoted to catalogues of Handel’s music that were donated by the family of Julian Marshall (1836–1903) in 1923 and added to the Royal Music Library. Mostly these catalogues were derived from the French manuscript originals by Schoelcher, and the relevant volume (R.M. 18.b.2) comprises principally a copy, in French and on paper with a watermark date 1874, of a large section from a catalogue of Handel’s works compiled in the 1850s by Schoelcher. 46 However, the first part of R.M. 18.b.2, up to f. 45, is in English and was written by Marshall himself. The section on Handel sources (ff. 25–32, with the descriptions of autographs and manuscript copies from the Royal Music Library on ff. 25–29) may be a translation from a French original by Schoelcher, or a transcript of an English description that Rophino Lacy had prepared for him, but unless an earlier version of the text is discovered there must also be the possibility that this section was newly-written by Marshall and describes the manuscripts as they were found in the 1870s rather than the 1850s. It was certainly the source for the description of Handel manuscripts that was printed in Mrs Marshall’s biography of Handel. 47 This list will therefore be referred to here as ‘Schoelcher/Marshall’.

Towards the end of the nineteenth century we at last have a description, however brief, of the physical circumstances of the Royal Music Library. In the special ‘Handel number’ of The Musical Times dated 14 December 1893 Walter Parratt, the Master of the Queen’s Musick, described it as follows:

The Royal Music Library in Buckingham Palace is to be found in a far corner of that labyrinthine building, and is approached from the main entrance, through long corridors lined with royal portraits, and numerous back-stairs and passages. The room itself is about 15ft. square, somewhat high in proportion, and with books in rich bindings on all sides. … Considerations of space have no doubt hampered the librarians, and it is certain that the shelves will soon be fully occupied.

44 King, Handel and his Autographs, p. 15; Schoelcher, The Life of Handel, p. xviii; G. A. Macfarren, A Sketch of the Life of Handel, with particular notices of the works selected for each day’s performance, at the Centenary Festival in the Crystal Palace (London, 1859), p. 31. In a letter to Mendelssohn dated 26 January 1840 (Oxford, Bodleian Library, Mendelssohn ‘Green Books’, xi, 26) Sterndale Bennett wrote that ‘Mr. Anderson cannot at present let me see the Manuscript [of Samson] on account of the Buckingham Palace undergoing alteration and the Library all put aside’, but in the near future ‘The Queen’s Library will be opened and I will examine it carefully’.

45 This is the sequence described in The Musical Times, 1 July 1902 (see below).


Fig. 10. The first page from the list of Handel's autographs in the hand of Julian Marshall, c.1875 (R.M. 18.b.2, f. 25r).
This was followed by a further description in the anonymous article (probably written by F. G. Edwards) in *The Musical Times* for 1 July 1902, to which reference has already been made:

> Until quite recently the books were kept in glazed bookcases in a room at the back of the state ball-room. This location – an upper story approached by a single and narrow staircase – was a most unsatisfactory one, as in the event of a fire the entire collection, with its priceless Handel treasures, might have perished. Last year, however, the cases and their contents were removed from the elevated position they had so long occupied and deposited in a fire-proof room situated in the basement of that labyrinthine building known as Buckingham Palace. There the books remain under the vigilant care of the Master of the King’s Musick. … Upon entering the room, the centre of attraction is the splendid collection of Handel manuscripts – eighty-seven volumes, bound in royal red. … They are the private property of the Sovereign. … The volumes are of various sizes, ranging from small oblong folio to the tall tome.

The relocation of the Music Library was probably part of a more general re-arrangement of rooms at the Palace on the accession of King Edward VII. The new basement room was subsequently described by Barclay Squire as ‘fire-proof but not damp-proof’, though the damp-staining that is found on some of Handel’s autographs may not have originated at this time.48 King speculated that by about 1906 Squire had already probably begun a campaign to persuade the Palace staff to deposit the Library at the British Museum, where he was in charge of printed music.49 However, it took yet another succession to the crown before this was achieved:

> King George V approved the loan in March 1911 and the transfer took place in the same year. Squire retired from the service of the Trustees in 1920 and was appointed Honorary Curator of the collection [in 1924]. It was housed temporarily in the White Wing of the Museum, until the King Edward Building, where space had been allocated to the new Music Room, could be completed. This was, however, delayed by the First World War, and it was not until early in 1919 that the royal music was moved to the room.50

The most detailed documentation of the Royal Music Library as it was to be found at Buckingham Palace comes from the period just before its transfer to the British Museum, in a manuscript labelled ‘Royal Music Library. / Buckingham Palace. / Inventory. / Feb. 1911.’, written by F W. Jekyll, Assistant Keeper in the Department of Printed Books at the Museum.51 Jekyll’s inventory lists the items in the Royal Music Library by shelf order, moving through bookcases A to Z, and from this it seems that the music had been thrown together in a haphazard way. Most of the Handel manuscripts were to be found on the five shelves of Case A and shelves 2-5 of Case B (see fig. 11). The autographs and manuscript

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48 See King, ‘The Royal Music Library’, p. 115, and note 56, below. The nineteenth-century description in R.M. 18.b.2 (f. 25r) mentions the possibility that the staining of outer leaves on the autographs may have been caused by storage ‘against a damp wall’ at an early stage, but the discoloration may have been the result of exposure to sun rather than moisture.
50 King, *Handel and his Autographs*, p. 16.
Fig. 11. A page from Jekyll's inventory of the Royal Music Library, 1911 (R.M. 19.f.11, f. 6r).
copies were not allocated separate sections: they were only roughly kept together in blocks and followed no rational order, by titles, genres or composition dates, though the taller autograph volumes and the folio-size volumes of the so-called ‘Smith Collection’ were to be found on the lower shelves (Case A shelf 5, Case B shelves 4-5). In Case B Handel had to share with other composers: Shelf 1 housed a harpsichord score and performing parts for Gluck’s *Alceste*, sets of parts for overtures and ‘Italian songs’, and anonymous harpsichord music, while shelves 6-7 had miscellaneous printed music including *The Ladies Amusement*, catches and glees, and works by Spohr, Campra and Rossini. A few manuscript copies of Handel’s music were to be found in Cases Q, T, V and W; early printed editions of Handel’s music were in Cases S, T and X; groups of manuscripts of Steffani’s operas and duets were in Cases C and X, with a further three volumes of duets in Case L. A storage problem with which many of us can empathize is revealed by some other entries:

   Pile 4 – Apollo’s Feast. 5 vols
Top of W-Y: Pile 8 – Cluer, Meares and Walsh editions of Handel’s operas Birchall’s edition of Chandos Anthems,
   Wedding Anthem (Arnold’s Edition)
Mantelpiece: [3 Piles] – Handel’s Works (Randall’s Full Scores, bound uniformly in red)

and a number of heaps of music on the top of a ‘small table’.

It is possible to trace individual volumes of Handel autographs through a trail in the successive lists of Burney, Mendelssohn, Schoelcher/Marshall and Jekyll, and also to follow the other Handel manuscript copies from Schoelcher/Marshall to Jekyll, and thus to the present R.M. collection at the British Library (see Appendix 1). There are a few shreds of evidence that enable us to speculate on the earlier shelving arrangements for the autographs. Nicolay seems to have been quite a methodical librarian, and it would have been rational to group volumes from the various broad categories of Handel’s works together – operas, oratorios, church music, cantatas and instrumental music. Within the operas and oratorios the sequence could have been chronological: this may, indeed, have been the reason for stamping the year-dates on the spines. The dates relate to years of composition rather than first performance, and were presumably taken directly from the composer’s annotations on the music pages. Burney’s 1785 list of the autograph volumes arranges the works by categories and year-dates, but unfortunately this cannot be taken as certain evidence of the shelf-arrangement, because it seems probable that he was working from a copy, no doubt amended and annotated, of the list of works in Mainwaring’s Memoirs of Handel, published in 1760. Errors in this source explain a couple of rather startling anomalies in Burney’s list of the oratorios. Following Mainwaring, Burney attributes *Susanna* to the year 1743, which was probably a misreading of ‘1748’ in Handel’s written date: in this case, the spine has the correct year-date. More curious is the erroneous date of ‘1740’ for *Saul*, again derived from Mainwaring, when the autograph clearly carries Handel’s annotations from 1738;

52 The ‘Smith Collection’ volumes (see note 66, below) were not shelved in the numerical sequence of the spine labels.

53 [John Mainwaring], *Memoirs of the Life of the late George Frederic Handel* (London, 1760), pp. 149-55. Mainwaring’s list includes full composition dates (day, month, year) for several operas and oratorios, usually Handel’s date for the completion of the draft score, but before the ‘filling-up’ stage. These are not transcribed entirely accurately, but must have been derived from Handel’s autographs, and it is even possible that the arrangement of Mainwaring’s list reflected the storage system in Handel’s own library.

54 Burney repeated the ‘1740’ date for *Saul* in his published notes on pieces performed at the Handel Commemoration (*An Account*, First Performance, p. 32, Fourth Performance, pp. 97, 103), but in *A General History*, vol. iv, p. 429, he correctly records the first performance in January 1739.
original spine of the autograph volume unfortunately does not survive, so we do not know what date it carried. The lists in the Schoelcher/Marshall description of the autographs are also organized by categories – Operas (32 volumes), Oratorios (21 volumes), Odes and Serenatas (7 volumes), Sacred Music (12 volumes), Cantatas and Sketches (11 volumes), Instrumental Music (5 volumes) – but with the titles in the major groups arranged in alphabetical sequence. This imposes an order on the collection that was almost certainly at variance with reality, for it is very unlikely that the autographs were shelved in such a tidy and coherent manner at Buckingham Palace in the 1850s. Mendelssohn’s list of operas and oratorios from his 1829 visit appears to be very haphazard, and the obvious explanation for this is that, with limited time at his disposal, he simply wrote down the titles in the order he found them on the shelves (or in the packing-cases). There is the hint of a reverse-chronological sequence to his opera titles, which perhaps retains a shadow of the former shelving order. Jekyll’s list at first sight seems to reflect a different form of chaos, but there are small groups of manuscripts that seem to have travelled around together since Mendelssohn’s time. For example, the following sets of names can be traced from Mendelssohn’s list (see fig. 9) to f. 6 of Jekyll’s list (see fig. 11): Giustino, Atalanta, Arminio; Occasional Oratorio, Judas Maccabaeus, Alexander Balus; Radamisto, Agrippina, Muzio Scevola. It is not difficult to imagine the situation as the music was moved from one location to another in Buckingham Palace, with groups of two or three volumes being lifted off the shelves together, placed onto trolleys and then unloaded in similar fashion. This is, however, accompanied by the discouraging reflection that for a period of eighty years no one may have felt sufficiently troubled to take the disorderly arrangement in hand. The furnishings of the specially-designed room for the Royal Music Library at the British Museum may have attempted to imitate the cases of the Buckingham Palace library room (see fig. 12). The distribution of the contents, by cases and shelves, however owed nothing to the previous arrangement, and Barclay Squire faced a considerable task in bringing some sort of order into what he received. Manuscript copies of Handel’s works were grouped by him in the R.M. 18 and R.M. 19 series, printed editions in R.M. 6 and R.M. 7, and the autographs in R.M. 20, protected in a corner case.

Without disturbing the integrity of most of the volumes of operas and oratorios, Squire made some re-arrangement of the autographs, resulting in an expansion from eighty-eight volumes to ninety-seven. He also interfered with the integrity of the Handel collection in one important, and beneficial, respect. Between the deposit of the Royal Music Library and the completion of the Library room he had purchased a large number of manuscript copies of Handel’s works from the ‘Aylesford’ sale in 1918, and obtained permission for these to be amalgamated into the Royal collection. Another significant addition came with the presentation of the three

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55 In Schoelcher’s list of operas ‘Giulio Cesare’ appears to be in the wrong place, because it was entered as if under ‘Julius Caesar’, which may have been the title as given on the original spine label. The lists of both Burney and Schoelcher may, of course, have been reproduced from lists that had been supplied by Buckingham Palace, rather than from an inspection of the volumes themselves, or Schoelcher may have used Burney’s list as his starting-point. The volumes of the ‘Smith Collection’ of Handel copies are listed by Schoelcher in the order of the numbers on the spine labels, and these may have been shelved in that order.

56 The last-named group is particularly intriguing, as these three volumes share quite heavy damp-staining on the upper area of the music pages.

57 Handel’s autographs would have been joined here by the Purcell autograph volume and a non-autograph volume of Purcell’s anthems and instrumental music (R.M. 20.h.8 and R.M. 20.h.9).


The Royal Music Library and its Handel Collection

Fig. 12. The Royal Music Library room at the British Museum. Case 20, which housed the Handel autographs, is in the far corner of the room.

Photo: Ministry of Works, 1953. BL Corporate Archive.
manuscript bibliographical volumes relating to Handel’s works (now R.M. 18.b.1, R.M. 18.b.2 and R.M. 19.f.9) that have already been mentioned, from the family of Julian Marshall in 1923.\textsuperscript{60}

The arrangement that Squire set up in the library room at the British Museum remained in place at the time of the Queen’s presentation in 1957, and indeed also in 1972 when the British Library Act transferred responsibility for the British Museum Library from the Trustees of the British Museum to the Board of the British Library.\textsuperscript{61} When a conservation programme for the autographs was undertaken in the 1980s, space in the bookcases came under pressure, as guarding-out and lamination added considerably to the binding width of each volume, and eventually the circumstances of the music books changed radically with the completion of the new British Library building at St Pancras, whereupon the Royal Music Library moved to its present location in the spring of 1998, along with the remainder of the British Library’s music collections.\textsuperscript{62}

Such is the relative glamour of the autographs that it is easy to forget the substantial riches in other areas of Handel sources which came with the Royal Music Library. A glance at William C. Smith’s catalogue of printed editions (or indeed Volume 3 of the original catalogue of the Royal Music Library) provides a reminder of the number of early printed editions that are represented, many of them presumably originating from the royal collections at the time of George I and George II (see Appendix 3).\textsuperscript{63} Of the pre-1760 editions of songs from the major works, there are thirty-nine copies for twenty-nine Italian operas and twenty-five copies for twenty-two English oratorio-type works. The series of full scores of the oratorios published by Walsh and Randall is represented by twenty-seven copies for twenty works, including five copies of issues 1-3 of Alexander’s Feast, for which the original 1738 subscription list included all seven of George II’s children.

The manuscript copies of Handel’s music in the R.M. series also include many things of value. There is, for example, the Italian-period score of Il trionfo del tempo with Handel’s autograph annotations in pencil relating to the 1737 version (R.M. 19.d.9), and similarly a manuscript of the 1712 version of Il pastor fido, marked up by Handel for the revival of May 1734 (R.M. 19.e.4) (see fig. 13). These presumably came into royal possession along with the autographs. (It is more of a mystery how Jennens’s incomplete manuscript keyboard score of Messiah, now R.M. 19.d.1, became mixed up with the composer’s autographs.)\textsuperscript{64} Then

\textsuperscript{60} The following year saw the beginning of negotiations (recorded in the correspondence file for the Royal Music Library, British Library Corporate Archive) on the subject of the part-books that had been found at the Chapel Royal: these included important eighteenth-century material, though no original pieces as composed by Handel for the Chapel. The Master of the Music (Edward Elgar) was doubtful of the value of keeping the part-books, and there was a potential problem in adding them to the Royal Music Library because they (and other items from the Chapel) were Crown property rather than the personal property of the King. Fortunately Squire managed to have the part-books transferred to the Museum. They were given shelf-marks in the series R.M. 23 and R.M. 27 (subsequently, all R.M. 27), but were not included or referred to in the published catalogues of the Royal Music Library, and at the Museum they were housed separately from the main R.M. collection.

\textsuperscript{61} The frontispiece photograph to King, Musical Pursuits, shows King at a desk in front of the entrance to the Royal Music Library room, with the inscription ‘The Queen’s Music Library’ on the lintel of the doorway.

\textsuperscript{62} The new building was formally opened by the Queen on 25 June 1998; the music collections had been transferred in the spring of that year.


\textsuperscript{64} These include a first edition of Theodora: An Oratorio, R.M. 7.g.19.(2.), which was omitted from the list in Smith, Handel: A Descriptive Catalogue.

\textsuperscript{65} The inclusion of this manuscript with the autographs probably accounts for the difference between the ‘87 volumes’ of the collection as described in R.M. 18.b.2 and the ‘88 volumes’ mentioned by Squire.
Fig. 13. Copyist's score of the opera *Il pastor fido*, with Handel's amendments in pencil relating to the preparation of a revival in 1734. (R.M. 19.e.4, f. 76v).
there are the two elegantly-bound manuscript volumes of movements from *Ariodante* and *Alcina* that were presented to Prince Albert in 1854, but which had originated in the 1730s. Last but not least (in size), there are the folio volumes of the ‘Smith Collection’ manuscripts, probably the result of a merger from at least two phases of collecting by different generations of the royal family, and subsequently made to look somewhat uniform by the application of the best-quality morocco bindings with characteristic (though frustratingly undateable) gold-tooling decorations, but also subject to some curious dispersals (see figs 14–16).

In conclusion, something may be said about the circumstances of the Royal Music Library in the period prior to the Queen’s gift. Once the contents of the Royal Music Library had been transferred to the British Museum, it seems to have taken more than a decade before the collection could be made generally available. In addition to the delays caused by wartime conditions and the delay in the completion of the King Edward Building, it was a major task to check, sort and arrange the contents, and Barclay Squire had few staff resources in support. Clearly Squire himself was heavily committed to the task, both before and after his formal retirement. The conditions for future access to the collection were laid down in a memorandum dated 24 November 1913 from Sir John Fortescue, the Royal Librarian at Windsor, and probably drafted by him. Even there, the special significance of the Handel autographs within the collection is recognized:

1. The Handel MSS. being deposited in the Museum chiefly for the benefit of students of Music, His Majesty is well content to leave to the Authorities of the Museum full discretion to grant or to withhold permission to individuals to have photographs made of any part of the MSS. for the purpose of study, collation and so forth: being confident that the Authorities will exert that discretion with justice and wisdom.
2. The King has no objection to the publication of any part of the MSS. by individuals or Societies, for the purpose of study or research, subject always to the reservation of his copyright. He is very willing that any competent student or editor should enjoy the fruits of his labours and research, such reservation notwithstanding. But he does not wish the Handel MSS. to become a happy hunting ground for scribblers, who may try to sell bad articles by including in them a reproduction of a hackneyed passage.

(The King also disapproved of the use of images from the manuscripts for picture postcards.) The subsequent files of correspondence about the Royal Music Library are mainly concerned with requests to reproduce music from the collection, which were

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66 See Donald Burrows, “The “Granville” and “Smith” Collections of Handel Manuscripts”, in Chris Banks, Arthur Searle and Malcolm Turner (eds.), *Sundry Sorts of Music Books: Essays on the British Library Collections, Presented to O. W. Neighbour on his 70th birthday* (London, 1993), pp. 231–47. I subsequently discovered another former ‘Smith’ volume, a score of Handel’s *Samson*, in the collection from the Oxford University Music Faculty (now Bodleian Library MS. Mus.b.130); it has the serial number ‘IX’ on the spine. The rather anomalous volume for *Samson* now in the ‘Smith Collection’ (R.M. 18.e.3) must have been copied as a replacement for the Royal Library.

67 Copies of the memorandum in the correspondence file for the Royal Music Library. Its progress is charted by a chain of letters in the file: the memorandum was sent on by Lord Stamfordham, from Buckingham Palace, to Walter Parratt (as Master of the King’s Music) on 26 November, and from Parratt to Squire the following day. John Fortescue’s memoirs *Author and Curator* (Edinburgh, 1933) make no mention of the Royal Music Library, presumably because its transfer was negotiated though the Master of the King’s Music rather than the Royal Librarian.
Fig. 14. Binding from manuscript score of Handel’s works in the ‘Smith Collection’. (R.M. 19 g.1).
Fig. 15. Binding. (R.M. 18.e.7).
Fig. 16. Binding. (R.M. 18.e.3).
referred to the successive Masters of the King’s Music.®

Formal permission was required to the end: the Preface to Watkins Shaw’s edition of Messiah, dated 23 June 1958, records an acknowledgment to ‘Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth II for gracious permission to use Handel’s original autograph score at a time preceding her gift of this, together with the rest of the Royal Music Library, to the British Museum in 1958.’

A separate register book was kept for the Royal Music Library, recording the items issued and signed by the readers; the last entry is dated 6 January 1958. At the beginning is a note by R. F. Sharp, Keeper of Printed Books, concerning the procedures for ‘permission to reproduce from the collection’: this is dated ‘10 Oct. 1924.’, and the first entry for a reader occurred on 17 December 1924, when Margaret Glyn saw the ‘Cosyns and Forster MSS.’ (The manuscripts apparently did not have shelf-marks at that time.) Although private arrangements may have been made earlier, it thus appears that regular access to the Royal Music Library began in 1924. Even so, the first issue of a Handel item did not take place until 7 November 1927, when F. A. Hadland saw the autograph and the ‘Smith Collection’ copy of the Occasional Oratorio (R.M. 20.f.3 and R.M. 18.e.7). It seems that the shelf-sequence for the Handel autograph volumes was only finalized towards the end of Squire’s labours on the Library collection. Surviving foliation statements (written in pencil on empty-stave pages or fly-leaves at the end of the volumes (see fig. 17)) show that folio numbers were not added until 1924, and the binding ledger for the Royal Music Library collection records considerable activity in 1925, with batches of autograph volumes manuscripts being checked and, where necessary, renovated. (The early pages of the binding ledger are devoted to other areas of the Royal Music Library.) The first appearance of a shelf-mark for the Handel autographs is on f. 47 of the binding ledger, concerning volumes that were received back from the bindery in February 1925.

In the years after 1927, following the publication of Squire’s catalogue of the Handel manuscripts, a few readers came to see various Handel items, manuscript and printed. The first entry for the autograph of Messiah (R.M. 20.f.2) appears in April 1930: not surprisingly, this became one of the autographs most frequently consulted. During the 1930s most interest in the Handel sources from the Royal Music Library centred on those for the oratorios and the instrumental works, including the miscellaneous ‘Aylesford’ volumes of the latter, though ‘Anthony Lewis’ ventured into the autographs of the Italian cantatas in

68 The arrangements are set out in a letter to the Director of the British Museum dated 29 September 1924, from Sir Frederick Ponsonby at Balmoral Castle, which repeated and clarified the policy outlined in letters from April 1911: the King’s wishes were that all applications to reproduce music should be referred to the Master of the Music, but applications to copy music should be dealt with by the Museum. The correspondence files show that Parratt, Elgar and Walford Davies were involved with the Royal Music Library as Masters of the Music, but thereafter applications for reproduction were referred to Sir Owen Morshead, the Royal Librarian at Windsor Castle.

69 Handel, Messiah, ed. Shaw, vocal score (London, 1959), p. v. The erroneous year-date for the presentation of the Royal Music Library was perhaps the consequence of a delay in the administrative arrangements.

70 Sharp was also appointed Honorary Curator for the Royal Music Library after Squire’s death, followed by W. A. Marsden who succeeded as Keeper of Printed Books on Sharp’s retirement in 1930.

71 There was early maintenance on a printed score of Messiah (R.M. 6.d.4), a large volume handsomely bound in black morocco with silk doublures: the edition itself (Addison / Goulding and D’Almaine, 1829) is not particularly distinguished, but it has a dedication to the King and this may have been a presentation copy to King George IV.


73 Arrangements for this may have been easier in the pre-war years, before the Messiah autograph became one of the items on permanent display in the British Museum galleries.
Fig. 17. Foliation statement at the end of the autograph volume for Handel’s Coronation Anthems (R.M. 20.h.5, f. 50v).
June 1938. The first call for an opera autograph was in June 1932 (Tamerlano, R.M. 20.c.11). A few Handel manuscripts were seen in July 1939, but thereafter the records cease in the approach to the Second World War. The manuscripts from the Royal Music Library, and probably the earlier printed editions, were moved into safe storage, but in May 1942 the register re-opens with the issue of some volumes from Chrysander’s Handel edition. There is only a small trickle of readers in the following years, none of them consulting Handel items, and normal activity was not resumed until January 1946.

The first post-war reader to request Handel materials from the Royal Music Library was Jens Peter Larsen, who saw fourteen items, most of them autographs, in June 1946; he returned again in June 1947, looking mainly at copies from the ‘Smith Collection’. In the pre-war period the only reader who had seen a large quantity of Handel manuscripts had been Jacob Coopersmith, on visits in 1931 and 1932. Both Coopersmith and Larsen were interested in trying to gain an overall view of Handel’s music and its sources, in contrast to most of the readers who were primarily interested in particular works or particular areas of the repertory. In subsequent years only Winton Dean and Jean E. Morton consulted a similarly copious quantity of Handel’s autographs; the heaviest demands with respect to a single work were made by John Tobin, who saw the Messiah autograph, usually accompanied by other sources for the oratorio, on seventeen occasions between 1949 and 1957. (Watkins Shaw signed for the autograph once, in January 1957.) However, general pressure on the use of the Royal Music Library had built up considerably by the mid-1950s, and not only for Handelian materials. The increase can be measured from the entries in the register, for which the following statistics provide a snapshot: the figures for each year record the number of items issued and the number of readers, with the number of different readers in brackets.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Items Issued</th>
<th>Readers</th>
<th>Different Readers</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1927</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>7 (5)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1930</td>
<td>80</td>
<td>23 (10)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1936</td>
<td>150</td>
<td>56 (26)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1950</td>
<td>158</td>
<td>98 (54)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1956</td>
<td>280</td>
<td>134 (63)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The transfer of responsibility for the care and use of the collection to the British Museum in 1957 was therefore both timely and practical. Fifty years on, the Royal Music Library remains an essential resource for the ongoing study of Handel’s music, and we can recognize the importance of her Majesty’s gift.

Appendix 1. Volumes of Handel’s Musical Autographs in the Royal Music Library

This Appendix collates the lists of volumes of Handel’s autographs from Burney, 1785 (B); Mendelssohn, 1829 (M); Schoelcher/ Marshall, c. 1875 (S); Jekyll, 1911 (J), and relates them to the present volumes in the R.M. series.

Arrangement: The main lists of operas and oratorios follow the order from B (with amendments consequent on the correction of dates for some items, as noted), which may reflect the shelf arrangement in King George III’s library, based on dates on the spines of the volumes. The categories and contents for the other sections are based on S, because B is vague and almost certainly incomplete in the later parts of the list: there is good agreement between S and J in the descriptions, including those entries that cover several volumes. The ‘Eighty-two Volumes’ listed by B include at least one non-autograph item, the part-books of Trio Sonatas (now R.M. 18.b.3). In spite of the general heading ‘87 Volumes’, the classified
lists in S give a total of 88 items, which appears to agree with Barclay Squire’s statement, dated December 1926, in the Introduction to the *Catalogue of the King’s Library, Part I*, that ‘The whole set of autographs, which formerly comprised 88 volumes, now consists of 97’. However, the 88 listed in S include the non-autograph ‘Sketch of the Messiah’ (now R.M. 19.d.1) and one unbound item (‘A vol. sewed containing a new version of “Mi palpita” with accompt. for hautbois, an air from Belshazzar, and 3 Opera airs.’). S also omits one volume that is mistakenly identified as an autograph in B: ‘Il Trionfo del Tempo’ (= R.M. 19.d.9). Other non-autograph volumes, listed at the end of the Appendix, may have been shelved with the autographs and regarded as part of that collection at various times.

**Columns 1 and 2:** Most of the eighteenth-century spines and spine-labels to the volumes were replaced in the course of the conservation programme during the 1980s. Original titles (on labels) and dates (stamped on the spines) that are still present on the volumes in 2008 are shown in bold. In a few cases the original labels, and sometimes the spines, were preserved separately when they were replaced: these are shown as [bold]. (Additionally, the original boards of some other volumes were preserved, without the spines or labels: these are not recorded here.) Spellings reproduce the forms found on the labels, or are based on those found in the lists; J has been taken as the most reliable witness for labels that are no longer extant, but significant variants from the other lists are also recorded. Where spine dates do not survive on the volumes of operas and oratorios, some incorrect dates from B are retained here, as they may have been the ones on the volumes.

**Column 3:** This indicates the inclusion of identifiable autograph volumes in the lists.

**Column 4:** In cases where the contents of the original volume were redistributed by Squire, references to the principal relevant R.M. volumes are shown in square brackets: see Burrows and Ronish, *Catalogue*, pp. xvii-xviii.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Title</th>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Lists</th>
<th>Present volume</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Operas</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Roderigo 1709</td>
<td>B,M,S,J</td>
<td>R.M. 20.c.5</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Agrippina 1709</td>
<td>B,M,S,J</td>
<td>R.M. 20.a.3</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>[Radamisto an opera] 1720</td>
<td>B,M,S,J</td>
<td>R.M. 20.c.1</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Muzio Scaevola 1721</td>
<td>B,M,S,J</td>
<td>R.M. 20.b.7</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ottone 1722</td>
<td>B,M,S,J</td>
<td>R.M. 20.b.9</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Giulio Cesare 1723</td>
<td>B,M,S,J</td>
<td>R.M. 20.b.3</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Floridante 1723</td>
<td>B,M,S,J</td>
<td>R.M. 20.b.2</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Flavio 1723</td>
<td>B,M,S,J</td>
<td>R.M. 20.b.1</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tamerlano 1724</td>
<td>B,M,S,J</td>
<td>R.M. 20.c.11</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rodelinda 1725</td>
<td>B,M,S,J</td>
<td>R.M. 20.c.4</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Alessandro 1726</td>
<td>B,M,S,J</td>
<td>R.M. 20.a.5</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Scipione 1726</td>
<td>B,M,S,J</td>
<td>R.M. 20.c.6</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Riccardo [Primo] 1727</td>
<td>B,M,S,J</td>
<td>R.M. 20.c.2</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tolomeo 1728</td>
<td>B,M,S,J</td>
<td>R.M. 20.d.1</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Siroe 1729</td>
<td>B,M,S,J</td>
<td>R.M. 20.c.9</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

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76 Binding ledger ff. 31, 44 refers to this as ‘Julius Caesar’, which may have been the form on the label. B, S: Giulio Cesare; M: Caesar; J: Julius Caesar.

77 B: Riccardo Primo; S: Riccardo 1°; M: J: Riccardo.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Title</th>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Language</th>
<th>Code</th>
<th>Library</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Lotario</td>
<td>1729</td>
<td>B, M, S, J</td>
<td>R.M. 20.b.6</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Partenope</td>
<td>1730</td>
<td>B, M, S, J</td>
<td>R.M. 20.b.11</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Poro</td>
<td>1731</td>
<td>B, M, S, J</td>
<td>R.M. 20.b.13</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Orlando</td>
<td>1732</td>
<td>B, M, S, J</td>
<td>R.M. 20.b.8</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sosarme</td>
<td>1732</td>
<td>B, M, S, J</td>
<td>R.M. 20.c.10</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Arianna</td>
<td>1733</td>
<td>B, M, S, J</td>
<td>R.M. 20.a.6</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ariodante</td>
<td>1734</td>
<td>B, M, S, J</td>
<td>R.M. 20.a.7</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Alcina</td>
<td>1735</td>
<td>B, M, S, J</td>
<td>R.M. 20.a.4</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Arminio</td>
<td>1736</td>
<td>B, M, S, J</td>
<td>R.M. 20.a.8</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Atalanta</td>
<td>1736</td>
<td>B, M, S, J</td>
<td>R.M. 20.a.9</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Giustino</td>
<td>1736</td>
<td>B, M, S, J</td>
<td>R.M. 20.b.4</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Berenice</td>
<td>1737</td>
<td>B, M, S, J</td>
<td>R.M. 20.a.10</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Serse</td>
<td>1738</td>
<td>B, M, S, J</td>
<td>R.M. 20.c.7</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Imeneo</td>
<td>1740</td>
<td>B, M, S, J</td>
<td>R.M. 20.b.5</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Deidamia</td>
<td>1740</td>
<td>B, M, S, J</td>
<td>R.M. 20.a.11</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Oratorios, etc** 79

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Title</th>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Language</th>
<th>Code</th>
<th>Library</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Oratorio [La Resurrezione]</td>
<td></td>
<td>B, J</td>
<td></td>
<td>R.M. 20.f.5 80</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>[Birth day ode for Queen Ann]</td>
<td></td>
<td>S, J</td>
<td></td>
<td>R.M. 20.g.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Esther</td>
<td>1720, 1732</td>
<td>B, M, S, J</td>
<td></td>
<td>R.M. 20.e.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Acis &amp; Galatea</td>
<td>1721, 1735</td>
<td>B, M, S, J</td>
<td></td>
<td>R.M. 20.a.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Deborah an oratorio</td>
<td>1733</td>
<td>B, M, S, J</td>
<td>R.M. 20.h.2</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Athaliah81</td>
<td>1733</td>
<td>B, M, S, J</td>
<td>R.M. 20.h.1</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Alexander’s Feast</td>
<td>1736 84</td>
<td>B, M, S, J</td>
<td>R.M. 20.d.4</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>[Saul an oratorio]</td>
<td>1738 85</td>
<td>B, S, J</td>
<td></td>
<td>R.M. 20.g.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Israel in Egypt</td>
<td>1738 83</td>
<td>B, M, S, J</td>
<td>R.M. 20.h.3</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ode for St. Cecilia’s Day</td>
<td>1739 86</td>
<td>B, S, J</td>
<td></td>
<td>R.M. 20.f.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>L’Allegro ed Il Penseroso87</td>
<td>1739</td>
<td>B, S, J</td>
<td></td>
<td>R.M. 20.d.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Messiah</td>
<td>1741</td>
<td>B, M, S</td>
<td></td>
<td>R.M. 20.f.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>[Sampson an oratorio]</td>
<td>1742</td>
<td>B, M, S, J</td>
<td>R.M. 20.f.6</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Semele an oratorio</td>
<td>1743</td>
<td>B, M, S, J</td>
<td>R.M. 20.f.7</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Joseph</td>
<td>1743 88</td>
<td>B, M, S, J</td>
<td>R.M. 20.e.10</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

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78 B: S; Faramondo; M, J: Faramond.
79 Includes titles from two sections in S: ‘Oratorios’ and ‘Odes & Serenatas’.
80 B: Oratorio Italiano; J: Oratorio; binding ledger f. 34: ‘Paste new title ‘La Resurrezione’ over old one (Oratorio)’ (November 1923).
81 B: Acige e Galatea; S: Acig & Galatea (Italian); J: Acic e Galatea; the volume also included the cantata *Tra le fiamme*.
82 Includes music for the 1732 version.
83 B: Athalia; M: Athal; S, J: Athaliah.
84 B: 1735, though Mainwaring’s list has 1736.
85 B: 1740
86 B: 1736.
87 S: L’Allegro &c; J: L’Allegro.
88 B: 1746, but recorded as 1743 by M in 1833.
The Royal Music Library and its Handel Collection

Belshazzar 1743 B,M,S,J R.M. 20.d.10
Hercules an oratorio 1744 B,M,S,J R.M. 20.e.8
Occasional Oratorio 1746 B,M,S,J R.M. 20.f.3
Judas Maccabaeus 1746 B,M,S,J R.M. 20.e.12
Joshua 1747 B,M,S,J R.M. 20.e.11
Alexander Balus 1747 B,M,S,J R.M. 20.d.3
Susanna an oratorio 1748 B,M,S,J R.M. 20.f.8
Solomon 1749 B,M,S,J R.M. 20.h.4
Theodora an oratorio 1749 B,M,S,J R.M. 20.f.9
Choice of Hercules 1751 B,M,S,J R.M. 20.e.6 [with Alceste]

Sacred Music

Anthem S,J R.M. 20.g.1
Anthem 3 vols B,M,S,J R.M. 20.d.6-8
Coronation Anthems M,S,J R.M. 20.h.5
Funeral Anthem S,J R.M. 20.d.9
Gloria &c S,J R.M. 20.g.10
Laudate Pueri/Dixit Dominus 1707 B,M,S,J R.M. 20.f.1
Motetti & Duetti B,M,S,J R.M. 20.g.9
Te Deum & Jubilate 1712 M,S,J R.M. 20.g.5
1713
Te Deum &c.
Te Deum laudam 1743 M,S,J R.M. 20.h.6

Cantatas & Sketches

Cantata[s] B,S,J [R.M. 20.e.3]
Cantata & Anthem S,J R.M. 20.g.8
Cantatas 2 vols B,M,S,J [R.M. 20.d.11, d.12]

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89 B: 1745, following Mainwaring, Memoirs, but correctly 1746 in Burney, A General History. Handel's annotation on f. 1r includes 'Anno 1746'.
90 B: 1743 (from Mainwaring, probably 8 misread as 3).
91 B: 1750.
92 B: 'Anthem, 8 vols', 'Te Deums and Jubilate, 3 vols'. The count for 'Anthem' presumably included items 1-4 here (6 vols) and 'Cantata & Anthem' (R.M. 20.g.8, see below), leaving one volume (?possibly R.M. 20.g.10) unaccounted for.
94 Also label on original front board, with the names of the four anthems, in the order as now bound.
95 M: 'Te deums', without specifying the number of vols.
96 This and the following probably account for B: Cantatas, 4 vols., also M: '1 Buch italän. Cantaten für 1 Stimme mit Orch. begleit. / 3 dito.'
The Royal Music Library and its Handel Collection

Sketches 98
Songs & Sketches 3 vols 99
‘A vol sewed’ 101

Instrumental Music

Fire Music 102
[Grand Concerto’s] 103 (1739)
[Organ Concerto] 104
[Sketches of Fughes &c.]
Sonata’s &c. 105

NON-AUTOGRAPH ITEMS BOUND IN THE SAME STYLE AS THE AUTOGRAPH VOLUMES, AND PROBABLY ORIGINALLY SHELVED WITH THEM.

Some of these may have been included in the sequence as substitutes for missing autographs. In J, R.M. 19.g.2 is listed as an autograph, and Barclay Squire annotated R.M. 19.d.1 and R.M. 19.g.2 with ‘20’, as if he intended to include them in the R.M. 20 series.

Sketch of part of the Messiah
Oratorio della Ressurezione
Il triumpho del Tempo an oratorio 1 & 2
Serenade or ode for Queen Ann’s birth day
Opera di Teseo
Amadis an opera 108

99 Probably = B: ‘Opera Songs, 2 vols.’ + ‘Collection of Songs and Choruses’; M has ‘3 Songs & Sketches’ [including ‘Deutsch, ital., Arien’] also ‘1 dito Buch voll Arien, Chöre, Entwürfe’ and ‘1 dito mit Skizzen zu Armida, “Teseo”, but ‘3’ may refer to the sequence of Mendelssohn’s own list, rather than 3 vols in addition to the following.
100 See Burrows and Ronish, Catalogue, pp. xvii-xviii.
101 Perhaps = J: Songs.
102 Volume re-backed, but using the original label.
103 Probably = B: ‘Concerti Grossi’; S, J: ‘Grand Concertos’; as now, the volume probably included the ‘Alexander’s Feast’ concerto HWV 318, as well as Op. 6 concertos.
105 The apostrophe, not present on the modern spine, is given in S.
106 S: Sketch of the Messiah (listed with autographs); J: Sketch of Messiah (listed as autograph). This may have been the wording on the original label, subsequently replaced. S adds a note ‘The title is erroneous. It is a thin vol. containing the beginning of the Messiah arranged for Clavecin’, but does not question that the music is in Handel’s hand.
107 B: Il Trionfo del Tempo Rome 1709 London 1737.
108 Annotation in pencil, on the flyleaf facing the first music page: ‘This is not an original M.S. by Handel W. G. C[usins]’. An entry in the binding ledger shows that a spine label ‘Original Score’ was removed in 1925.
Appendix 2. Handel Material in ‘Queen Caroline’s Library’

Source: *A Catalogue of The Royal Library of Her late Majesty Queen Caroline – Distributed into Faculties – 1743* (manuscript, Royal Library, Windsor Castle), pp. 175-177a (‘Musick’, ‘Musick in Mst.’), pp. 172-3 (‘Italian Plays, Operas.’).

**Music**

‘Otho an Opera’. Presumably the printed edition from Walsh and Hare; the earliest copy now in the Royal Music Library is R.M. 7.h.37 (Smith 9, c. 1730).


**Opera word-books**

Items marked * are represented in the present King’s Library series at the British Library by single copies, apart from *Radamisto* 1720 (2 copies, different editions). The library list has no Handel word-book later than 1734, but has some word-books from productions of the Opera of the Nobility in 1735-6.


Appendix 3. Early Printed Editions of Handel’s Music in the Royal Music Library

Editions are listed according to the issues designated in William C. Smith, *Handel: a Descriptive Catalogue of the Early Editions*, 2nd ed. (Oxford, 1970): ‘Admeto 1’ refers Smith’s edition ‘1’ for that opera. Where there are multiple copies, they are shown as ‘(x2)’ etc.

1. **Operas** (editions pre 1760)


Not included

*Amadigi, Ariodante, Catone, Imeneo, Lucio Vero, Muzio Scevola, Ormisda, Il Pastor Fido* (earliest copy Smith 6, 1795), *Venceslao*
2. English oratorios, odes etc.

a. Song collections, editions pre 1760

Acis and Galatea 5, Alexander Balus 2, L’Allegro 5, L’Allegro 9, Athalia 1, Belshazzar 3, The Choice of Hercules 2, Deborah 6, Esther 5, Hercules 1, Jephtha 1, Joseph and his Brethren 2, Joshua 3, Judas Maccabaeus 3, Occasional Oratorio 3, Ode for St Cecilia’s Day 1, Samson 2(x2), Samson 4, Saul 5, Semele 3, Solomon 1, Theodora 1, Susanna 1, Triumph of Time and Truth 1

b. Scores of English works, from Walsh’s successors Randall and Wright after 1766, unless indicated as ‘(Walsh)’

Acis and Galatea 6 (Walsh), Acis and Galatea 9, Alexander’s Feast 1 (Walsh), Alexander’s Feast 2 (Walsh), Alexander’s Feast 6 (x3, Walsh), Alexander’s Feast 8, L’Allegro 11, Belshazzar 5, The Choice of Hercules 4, Deborah 7, Esther 6, Israel in Egypt 1, Jephtha 3, Joseph and his Brethren 3, Joshua 4, Judas Maccabaeus 4(x2), Messiah 1, Occasional Oratorio 4, Ode for St Cecilia’s Day 3, Samson 7, Saul 6, Solomon 3, Susanna 2, Theodora 4

Not included
Songs: Messiah (earliest Smith 7, late 1770s)
Scores: Alexander Balus

3. Church Music (Walsh and Randall editions)

Coronation Anthems Walsh 2, Randall 4; Funeral Anthem Walsh 2, Randall 4; Dettingen Te Deum Randall 3; Utrecht Te Deum Walsh 2, Randall 5

Later editions of Cannons Anthems: Birchall & Beardmore 1, Wright & Wilkinson 4

4. Instrumental music (editions pre 1760)

Op.3 Concertos 3; Op. 4 Organ Concertos 3, 9; 2nd Set Organ Concertos 2, 3; Op. 6 Concertos 4; Fireworks Music 4; Water Music 5; Select Harmony Vol. IV 1

Suites I 6; Suites II 5; Six Fugues 1

Op. 2 Trio Sonatas 6(x2); Op. 5 Trio Sonatas 2

Not included
Solos Op. 1; Overtures (in parts, or harpsichord versions) before 1760. There are no copies of the collections of minuets ‘Perform’d at the Balls at Court’ from Handel’s lifetime.

5. Anthologies and miscellaneous collections

Early copies of Apollo’s Feast (Smith 3, 12, 13, 14, 15, 16) and Bass Songs (Smith 2, 5, 6, 7); early editions of collections Choice/Select Airs (Smith pp. 261–2), and The Lady’s Banquet (Smith 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 8, 9).